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ABSTRACT

Conceived by the staff of the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service as a means of aiding County Extension Advisors in working with volunteer 4-H leaders in Illinois, "Helping Leaders Help Youth" employed a combination of vinyl sound sheets for home study and a leader development meeting series supported by audiovisual aids and printed materials. Evaluation of the project involved: (1) 1973-74 phone surveys of the facilitating advisors; (3) 1974-75 case studies of 5 of the original 12 counties in the project (1 urban, 2 rural, and 2 rural-urban categories), including interviews with volunteer leaders (N=81), others indirectly associated with 4-H activities (N=29), 6 youth advisors, and the project's on-campus director. Results indicated: youth staff quickly became advocates of the leader development series' ready-made package; volunteers could offer profound insights into the large demands facing leaders at the grassroots level; use of the vinyl sound sheets presented media orientation difficulties; major volunteer concerns were time and travel, leader recruitment, program planning, and social learning; and major staff concerns were lack of previous volunteer training, the facilitator role of county advisors, and the need for delivery systems to reach leaders in isolated areas. (JC)

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# Helping Leaders Help Youth

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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## An Evaluation Report of a Program For Illinois Volunteer 4-H Leaders 1973-75

Developed by the Cooperative Extension Service
College of Agriculture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
and funded by
Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture,
Washington, D.C.

2

## 4-H Volunteer Leaders Comment on the Vinyl Sound Sheets . . .

"Even after 33 years teaching and 28 years a 4-H leader, the vinyl sound sheets on understanding youth of all ages were good."

"The records could stand alone without the meetings."

"It's hard to understand kids at certain ages, they can be so hard to teach. I really think that these records helped in that way."

"I found the records very informative and easy to listen to. This is an efficient way to train leaders."

"The records were excellent in quality of reproduction."

"I am a new leader. I was uncertain before about what I was to do. But with the help of these records, I have new ideas and better understanding of my duties."

"We were very interested in the records — we meaning the whole family. Everyone can benefit from these."

"I feel I learned more from these because they could be played repeatedly and when I had the time to really sit and listen."

"A good follow-up for the training we had. Showed us how to put some of the ideas we received into practice."

"They are actually a refresher course. They could be used by the Jr. Leaders to help them understand their duties better."

"Played very clear and evenly on small portable record player."

"They are a good 'take-home' method of storage of information."

*Helping Leaders Help Youth* was conceived by the staff of the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Illinois, as a means of aiding County Extension advisers* in working with volunteer 4-H leaders in Illinois. However, much of the information and many of the techniques covered in the program have value for leadership development efforts in any youth agency dependent on volunteer leaders. Responses from representatives of 4-H organizations throughout the country who have used the materials are included in this report.

The primary feature of the project was vinyl sound sheets for home study. In addition, it included a leader development meeting series supported by audio-visual aids and printed materials.

Literature showed that local 4-H leaders needed opportunities to increase their knowledge and to develop leadership skills in order to continue as leaders and to gain satisfaction from being a leader. A Western States study indicated that almost one-half (45 percent) of the local leaders in the study attended no county leadership development meetings.

In a similar study, E. J. Brown reported that 10 of 39 leaders attended no training meetings. In response to the question "what they liked least about being a 4-H Leader," they reported a feeling of inadequacy for the job.

Two distinct units of both sound sheets and meeting packets were developed, field tested, and evaluated. The evaluation of the project was conducted by members of the Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation (CIRCE), College of Education, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Their findings are presented in two forms: (1) a series of interpretive comments and related data are found on the opposite side of the folder; and (2) the vinyl sound sheet* enclosed in this jacket provides an overview of the evaluation. The planning and development of *Helping Leaders Help Youth* was centered around these sound sheets. Because *Helping Leaders Help Youth* was based on the idea of using sound sheets as a means of communication and instruction, we chose this approach as a way of demonstrating their effectiveness and utility.



* deleted

## Helping Leaders Help Youth

Vinyl records "Helping You Help Youth" are available for Unit I of the Illinois Leader Development project. These records may be purchased from UMC/Colson Company, Paris, Illinois 61944, at a cost of $1.40/set plus postage.

Topics covered on Unit I records include:

- What Is 4-H?
- 4-H Projects and Activities
- Your Role as a 4-H Leader
- The 4-H Meeting
- 4-H Program Planning
- Ideas That Work
- Understanding Boys and Girls, Age 9-12
- Understanding Boys and Girls, Age 13-15
- Understanding Boys and Girls, Age 16-19
- Teens Make Effective Leaders

Providing sufficient requests are made for Unit I records, Unit II sound sheets may also be available for sale.

Topics covered on Unit II records include:

- Involving 4-H'ers and Giving Responsibility
- How Your Club Works
- Teaching Tools and Techniques
- Listening to Youth
- Awards and Incentives
- Tapping Other Resources
- Publicizing 4-H
- Volunteers
- Individual Goals
- Evaluation
- 4-H Records

Material produced for the meeting packets may be ordered by writing and asking for a price listing.

Address correspondence to: Helping Leaders Help Youth
47 Mumford Hall
College of Agriculture
University of Illinois
(217) 333-0910

Copies of this evaluation report are also available while they last from the Project Office.

# Helping Leaders Help Youth

## Part I SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

In 1973-74, heavy reliance was placed on the use of questionnaires and telephone surveys throughout the twelve (12) pilot counties. (See the back side of the folder for listing of these sites.) The following year field studies were conducted in five of the counties, questionnaires were again employed with volunteer leaders, but the telephone survey involving the youth staff in the twelve counties was dropped. During the two-year period, the evaluators also acted as participant-observers in a number of meetings held in conjunction with the project. Some of these sessions were designated as training periods for youth advisers testing materials; others were viewed primarily as opportunities for acquiring feedback from the 4-H people. In all cases, though, valuable information was obtained. Furthermore, advisers in counties other than the original pilot group regularly conducted local forms of evaluation as they taught the leader development series and distributed the sound sheets.

**1973-74** Both pre- and post-training session questionnaires were distributed by the advisers* and then mailed back to campus. A pivotal question in the former survey asked respondents to list the three greatest concerns they were experiencing as 4-H leaders. The responses that stood out in the 337 returns were lack of parental cooperation, the diverse age ranges encompassed by 4-H membership (8-19), and a category perhaps best defined as "the leader as teacher versus the leader as motivator."

Approximately 500 questionnaires were mailed out prior to the launching of Unit I. A smaller number (300) was used to obtain post-session responses. Of the 171 replies, virtually all indicated that the leader workshops had been "helpful," particularly with respect to presenting ideas on program planning, frequently a major problem for volunteers. Experienced leaders, however, saw much of the content as "repetitious," presenting "things they already knew," and this same pattern was later reflected in assessments of the Unit I sound sheets.

The phone survey was directed solely at advisers in the pilot counties and was intended to elicit reactions to their dual role as teachers of the leader development series and as distributors of the vinyl sound sheets. "Mediators," "translators," "trainers," whatever the terminology, those individuals bringing developmental efforts to target audiences are key personnel. The advisers from the beginning were much attracted to the leader development series; they were less enchanted by demands identified with testing of the sound sheets. Reasons for their behavior are discussed in Parts II and III.

**1974-75** Case studies conducted in five of the original dozen counties highlighted the year's activities. As noted previously, the decision to integrate field endeavors with survey data was viewed as a way of discovering subtle pressures influencing reactions to the leader development units. Two basic criteria guided the selection of sites. First was an acknowledgment of the need to work in a quintet of counties where the potential 4-H membership varied widely. Second, because of the state's diversity in land use policies and practices, a geographical spread also was deemed essential.

The original 12 counties included four designated as *Rural* – that is, up to 3,500 young people, ages 8-19; a quartet labeled *Rural-Urban*, defined as having between 3,000-25,000 young people in the same age bracket; and a final one-third representing *Urban* counties where more than 50,000 youths between the ages 8-19 resided. The five chosen as sites for case studies consisted of 1 Urban, 2 Rural, 2 Rural-Urban categories.

Interviews with volunteer leaders were regarded as the central element in these case studies. In addition, abbreviated sessions were held in each county with individuals known to possess knowledge about 4-H activities, but not directly associated with that organization. For example, farm supply dealers, merchants, school personnel, county sheriffs, newspaper editors, and persons attached to human service agencies were prominent in the list. A total of 110 persons were interviewed: 81 leaders and 29 from other realms. Beyond this work, careful ob-

*County Extension staff members in Illinois are called advisers rather than agents.

servations were made of the physical, economic, and demographic features of each site and statements made by local media, especially newspapers, concerning 4-H programs were examined.

Interviews were also conducted with the youth advisers in each of the five counties and with the on-campus director of the project and his staff. Results of all interviews cited above are found in Parts II and III. Also included is feedback obtained from the final act of evaluation, a questionnaire mailed to 283 leaders, including all those interviewed as part of the case studies. A copy of that questionnaire concludes Part I.

EVALUATION OF "HELPING YOU HELP YOUTH," FINAL PHASE

DIRECTIONS: This questionnaire is divided into two parts. Part A is concerned only with the Leader Development *meetings*. Part B is concerned only with the *vinyl sound sheets*. We have attempted to provide "short cuts" wherever possible.

Please respond to the appropriate questions and mail your return in the enclosed envelope. We would like *everyone* to respond to the *last* question, No. 9, page 2.

Part A. *The Leader Development Meetings*

1. Did you attend the recent sessions concerning the Leader Development Series, *Unit II*, entitled "Helping You Help Youth"?

   Yes____ No____ (please check)

2. If you check "No," please move to Part B, page 2; if you indicated "Yes," please respond to the following items.

   a. What was the *strongest* feature of the meetings?

   b. The *weakest*?

3. Did you attend the previous meetings offered as part of *Unit I*?

   Yes____ No____ (please check)

4. If you checked "No," please move to Part B, page 2; if you indicated "Yes," please respond to the following question: In your opinion, is there a major difference between Units I and II? If your answer is "Yes," please tell us the difference or differences.

Part. B *The Vinyl Sound Sheets*

5. Have you listened to the vinyl sound sheets identified with the Leader Development Series, Unit II (orange-colored jacket)?

   Yes  No  (please check)

6. If you checked "No," please move to the *last* question; if you checked "Yes," please respond to the following items:

   a. What was the *most* satisfying sound sheet? Why?

   b. The *least* satisfying? Why?

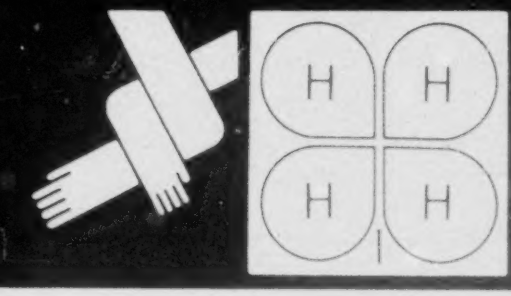
7. Did you also listen to the first set of sound sheets, *Unit I* (blue-colored jacket)?

   Yes  No  (please check)

8. If you checked "No," please move to the *last* question; if you checked "Yes," please respond to the following question: In your opinion, is there a major difference between Units I and II *vinyl sound sheets?* If your answer is "Yes," please tell us the difference or differences.

9. *Last question.* Do you have a message for those of us involved with development of training programs and materials for volunteer leaders? If so, please write it below.

THANK YOU!



# Helping Leaders Help Youth

## Part II ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES

Information obtained during the first months of Unit I's field testing proved to be a forerunner of future trends. A trio of themes held their position as central findings a year later.

(1) Youth staff working in the pilot counties quickly became advocates of the leader development series, in large part because they were deeply involved in an experimental effort, which offered them a ready-made package to use.

(2) Volunteer leaders displayed a strong sense of loyalty and commitment to 4-H and the need for continual learning, but offered some profound insights concerning the host of demands facing leaders at the "grassroots" and neighborhood levels.

(3) Uncertainty surrounding the distribution and use of vinyl sound sheets was a harbinger of impending developments in all areas of activity where new media challenge traditional approaches to communication.

An analysis of data collected by the efforts outlined in Part I lends credence to the generalizations stated above.

### The Advisers

Although only five counties were included in the case studies, six interviews were actually conducted – because one county had two advisers working with youth. It was noted earlier that agents soon fashioned a devoted allegiance to the leader development series. Their own testimony suggests why.

"It (the series) is some of the best leader material to appear during my years (10) of 4-H work."

The same individual admitted that responses by leaders to the sound sheets were less than desired. "We need to play one, to demonstrate its usefulness and value in our training sessions," he said. An older colleague offered another perspective. "I fully realize the sound sheets are very important," he conceded, "but the (meeting) package is so good that we should make good use of it."

Perhaps the most media-oriented of the advisers, who was described by his associates as possessing a "phenomenal" understanding of media and information systems, responded with a variety of reactions. "Teaching the series has helped me tremendously," he stated. "It has educated me, given me a sense of confidence in my ability to deliver." A packaged training program, he continued, "gets into the system of any organization," and whereas the concept embodied in the sound sheets was "timely," in his judgment the recordings were more difficult for both leaders and agents to use.

A fourth adviser added to the sentiments expressed above.

"It was a very good learning experience for me. And the package reinforced the idea that we — and the university — could serve as resources. In fact, our leaders wondered why we waited so long to produce such a program."

Unquestionably, teaching the program materials did provide more direct rewards for the advisers; their counterparts in counties not chosen for case studies held similar opinions. This report will treat other dimensions of the package — sound sheets relationship in Part III, but certainly the degree of personal involvement and the amount of rewarding feedback received from *direct* experience in testing a new program are underscored by the advisers' comments.

### Volunteer Leaders

Interview results and leaders' responses to a variety of questionnaires fell into a pair of broad categories: concerns related to management of 4-H clubs and the constraints of time facing leaders on every hand. Their responses to the leader development series and to the sound sheets must be examined within those parameters. Some of their remarks about the sound sheets and the training sessions appear on the folder. This section focuses on the reactions of leaders to relationships they saw between the content of materials reaching them — regardless of the avenue employed — and the issues stated above. The stage is set by the following remarks.

"Being a farm wife and mother of five, two presently teenagers, I know that I don't have the time to be such a leader of youth as the records and materials suggest."

The danger of fostering standards that seem unreachable is ever present in training programs. Responding to a questionnaire specifically seeking feedback relative to the sound sheets, a leader wrote: "I listened to them right away before I started my club and I felt they gave me some confidence." Another was more definitive. "Ideas were presented that are making it easier to plan ahead," it was reported. This informant added, "Also, the records on understanding young people were very helpful."

Adults charged with the responsibility of working with youth are seeking aid from countless sources. The special demands confronting 4-H leaders were noted in Part I and will be explored in greater detail in Part III. Above all, though, policy decisions at the national level of 4-H operations have had a significant effect on the group context in which leaders are trying to function. In recent years, eligibility for membership in 4-H clubs has been lowered, first from ages 10 to 9, and is now open to eight-year-olds. Hence, the following remarks of leaders assume additional stature because the potential age range of any 4-H group could be 8 to 19.

"It's hard to understand kids at certain ages," an interviewee remarked. "They can be so hard to reach. I really think these records helped in that way." "Understanding the different age groups" was a response offered by another leader when asked to select the most useful information. Similar reactions were contained in statements about the leader development sessions.

A correspondent indicated that he had received assistance in coping with a constellation of problems, all of them linked to management dilemmas common to other service organizations as well as 4-H.

"How to help keep older 4-H members in 4-H. How to keep members interested. How to keep parents interested in helping."

Finally, a number of illustrations taken from returns on the last questionnaire, a copy of which concludes Part I, underscore the convictions of 4-H leaders that they are indeed caught up in demanding, albeit rewarding, situations. Training programs created for them must remain sensitive to their anxieties about time and the unique dimensions of group leadership. This series may be a prototypical representation — that is, a collection of "classic" statements pertaining to the problems and possibilities inherent in programs of human development.

TIME AND TRAVEL "This program was offered over a month's period — two nights a week. For us who live 30+ miles from the county seat one night or day a week is much better. Your leader response is much better. Your leader response is better if you hold area meetings. These (vinyl sound sheets) are not always expecting the leaders to drive to you."

RECRUITMENT OF LEADERS "We need to involve new leadership to strengthen our community. This busy world does not let one find time to attend so many meetings."

PROGRAM PLANNING "I feel like education, citizenship, and leadership development are getting too little attention compared to fun, happy times, and hobbies in today's 4-H program."

SOCIAL LEARNING "Continue to inspire us at least every year. These meetings allowed us to make contact with fellow leaders — and problem solving followed. Series made me feel needed and aware that most leaders have same problems — and your 4-H staff cares enough to give us help."

## Project Staff

The names and professional responsibilities of project staff are listed on the back side of the evaluation folder. Each was interviewed during the second year of operations. Their responses concentrated on three areas.

(1) The lack of orientation or training for Illinois volunteer leaders in the past.

(2) The role of county advisers as "facilitators" between the Cooperative Extension Service based on campus and the volunteer leaders.

(3) The need for delivery systems capable of reaching leaders who will not or cannot attend formal meetings.

Ideally, an updated needs assessment should have preceded the launching of this project. However, judging by reactions of leaders both the sound sheets and the training sessions offered valuable assistance with some of their gravest problems. The issue of time remains a formidable matter and must be reckoned with in any serious attempt to influence the behavior of volunteers. More information on this point appears in Part III.

Efforts to upgrade the training of Extension personnel were not a prime goal of the project. Nonetheless, the act of teaching the leader development series obviously served as an excellent form of in-

service education for the pilot advisers. In fact, this outcome represents an extremely worthwhile "side-benefit" of the total project. And it has raised an important concern — namely, how will advisers teach the series who have not undergone training similar to that experienced by those participating in the pilot study?

Yet to be determined is the real effectiveness of sound sheets as a medium of reaching volunteer 4-H leaders. There is a growing realization, and it is reflected in the interviews conducted with on-campus personnel, that comprehensive use of media requires significant changes in role behaviors of those people socialized by more conventional forms of education and experience. Again, Part III extends this probing.

Overall, the project team was delighted by the enthusiastic cooperation received from the 12 pilot advisers. Perhaps, there lies the key: the sheer act of meaningful participation can be a means of instilling a sense of deep commitment.

# Helping Leaders Help Youth

## Part III IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The results of a comparative analysis of three 4-H leader training programs conducted by graduate students at the University of Illinois lends further documentation to the promise of *Helping Leaders Help Youth*.[1] Comparing the series to a *Self Study Course for Adult 4-H Leaders* and to another program literally entitled *Leader Development Series*, the investigators pinpointed areas they saw as strengths of *Helping Leaders Help Youth*.

1. "Unit I (the second Unit was not covered by their study) does a superior job of involving the learners in discussions, practical exercises of brainstorming and actually involving the leaders in an exercise of 'goals and objectives' to establish goals."

2. "An outstanding job has been done in presenting information through various delivery systems. Involving the leaders through their active participation increases the chance for motivation. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation should be increased."

3. "The authors have used good judgment in taking into account the assessment of the capabilities and inclinations of the learners in the anticipated audiences. This should relate the activity to their needs."

4. "Creativity and variety are principles shown here. The selection and sequencing of appropriate experiences has been done well. Certainly they are designed to enhance capability and inclination."

"Adaptation and conditioning are educational principles exemplified," the authors conclude. "Adaptation" is a crucial matter. One of the country's most highly regarded scholars in the realm of social and educational development notes that "There must be significant features of *adaptation* in each new adoption"[2] (his italics). Adaptive features are particularly essential for any program designed to reach a variety of audiences across a wide spectrum of spatial settings. Excerpts taken from interviews with pilot advisers and the feedback furnished by leaders indicate that *Helping Leaders Help Youth* has such characteristics. Inquiries received from 4-H staff or Cooperative Extension personnel in other states provide additional substance.

From Alaska came the following notes:

"I am deeply appreciative of the vinyl sound sheets which you sent me recently. I have listened to these and am very interested, and I do hope that we will be able to purchase these from the National 4-H Committee . . . I really did enjoy listening to the sets and enjoyed the approach used in interviewing many different people."

A 4-H specialist in Puerto Rico wrote:

"I have been reading your Leaders' Manual 'Helping Leaders Help Youth.' I sincerely congratulate you for this manual which in my personal opinion is of great value for the development of 4-H Leaders and for the 4-H program."

And the importance of adaptive qualities as a means of encouraging widespread dissemination of programs is highlighted in a communication from North Dakota:

". . . You people have certainly done an excellent job of assembling materials for new 4-H leaders. We have found the printed guides to be very helpful. . . . We did a series of 4-H leader workshops in North Dakota this fall and incorporated some of your ideas from your leader training notebook. . . . We found that the other slide sets were excellent, also, but would need some revision to be used in North Dakota. Therefore, using your script from the leader book, we possibly will develop our own set of slides. Thank you for sharing these programs with us. We feel they have been a big asset to our leader training program."

Favorable responses notwithstanding, a trio of persistent issues confronts 4-H professionals, along with representatives of any organization or agency trying to employ adult volunteers in programs aimed at youth. These issues are:

1. the training of volunteers

[1] M. T. Barlass and Gordon E. Wakey, "Comparative Analyses of Three 4-H Leader Training Programs," an unpublished paper, Dept. of Educational Psychology, College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, May 1975, pages 17-19.

[2] Ronald Lippitt, "The Use of Social Research to Improve Social Practice," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, V. 35, No. 4 (July 1965), p. 668.

2. the processing and delivery of information, both in the area of adult education and in preparing materials for youthful members

3. the volatile context in which contemporary social agencies are attempting to function

A summary of findings from the evaluation of *Helping Leaders Help Youth* casts additional weight on the three elements which prompted the launching of this project.

## Working with Adult Volunteers

"The importance of adequate training in holding volunteer leaders is increasingly recognized," stated a doctoral thesis written in 1963.[1] A decade later, the project described in these pages was developed as a response to the same need. Reactions of volunteers participating in it support several other conclusions appearing in the 1960's study.

"Recruiters note that it is increasingly difficult to find people willing to accept volunteer jobs involving much responsibility," the investigator emphasized in her examination of 20 organizations relying heavily on volunteers to implement their programs. She continued: "This change reflects the growth of organizations to the point where volunteer jobs are more complicated than ever before." Without question, the same theme permeates feedback obtained during the course of this project.

In the ten years separating the two studies, 4-H has lowered its age level for membership, the rural-urban transition has intensified, and numerous mothers assert that they are serving as leaders solely because of "their own children." Furthermore, in one county where interviews were conducted, nine of ten mothers whose children belong to the same 4-H club, and all of whom are ostensibly living as "farm-wives," are working full-time in commercial or industrial jobs.

"Organizations acknowledge the need to help those at the lower end of the socio-economic scale," submitted the 1963 document. And in recent years, 4-H has made serious attempts to link programs traditionally identified with rural life to the growing urbanization of the United States. Mixed results have occurred, although our study found notable examples where 4-H personnel were successfully cooperating with other projects specifically directed at minority groups. Also, the feedback received from our final questionnaire, in particular, substantiates another finding in the earlier research effort noted above. Social service agencies "must be aware of the needs of those at the other (upper) extreme of the scale, although this is admittedly a smaller group," stressed the author. And then she added words very much in accord with our data: "As their members became better educated . . . and better able to communicate their needs and interests, more capable leadership is required."[2]

Four-H in Illinois is experiencing difficulties in retaining youth beyond age 14. School systems too are dealing with mounting problems at this level. Adult leaders exhibit impatience with undue simplicity of presentations or, in their view, unwarranted consumption of time by trainers. Longer years of formal schooling and an information-rich society have combined to drastically increase demands on volunteer leaders and, indirectly, those who would recruit and train them.

Pressures faced by the advisers are intensified because a need for better training of volunteer and professional leadership emerges "as psychological problems become more evident than physical problems," concludes the 1963 study. Two advisers in the pilot group concur. One graduated from college with a degree in sociology and social work. She remarked:

"We needed a little more on the sound sheets on how to work with leaders who have problems inside their clubs. How do we render better help as our number of kids increases while the pool of leaders goes down?"

A colleague working in a large county exemplifying the dynamics of an urban spill-over into agricultural lands extended her question. An emblem on his office wall read: "4-H Ain't All Cows and Cooking"; and he said:

"We the advisers need more training on psychological and sociological problems. On counseling, dealing with people. We need a better understanding of group dynamics, an understanding of individual kids, because leaders are constantly faced with kids they can't control, and then they turn to us for advice."

How is the advice to be delivered?

[1] "Securing Volunteers," Excerpts from the Ed.D. Doctoral Project by Ruth Eleanor Ward, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1963. Published by Youth Development 4-H, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, September 1971, 14 pages.

[2] Ibid.

## The Media as Message

Lippitt warns that innovations require new patterns of behavior in a new social context.[6] Undeniably, 4-H is trying to function amidst a "new" setting; but patterns of behavior are frequently more influenced by institutional norms than by actual needs of the situation. Of course, the paradox is not confined to 4-H.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that utilization of media by members of target audiences, as contrasted with the latter's current modes of listening or watching, will require major changes in several areas of institutional practices.[7] For example, if the primary role of advisers as mediators or translators of new programs is to *facilitate* leaders' use of media, then attendance at regular meetings is likely to drop. Many professionals in Extension believe in the value of formal meetings, in part because they were educated along such lines. In addition, the job-performance ratings to which they must be responsible are attuned to the same pattern. But a number of factors — e.g., the cost of gasoline, time constraints, and the difficulties of maintaining a systematic, logical order of presentations — are combining to challenge historical arrangements.

Farmers have already incorporated numerous forms of communications technology into their daily lives. In executing the case studies, many families interviewed were using two-way radio as a type of telephone linking the house to the fields. Both leaders and members of their clubs were often engaging in more imaginative uses of media than those who are allegedly responsible for "teaching" them.[8] Two illustrations supplied by advisers who field-tested the sound sheets are suggestive.

"Leaders have been using the vinyl sound sheets in some very interesting ways," wrote an adviser working in a heavily populated county. "One held a parent night," he continued, "where she invited parents of the 4-H'ers in her club to come and listen and learn. The evening, for the parents and the leaders, was very successful." And from a county marked by strip-mining came these remarks:

"I should have used the sound sheets more with junior leaders. A nearby county demonstrated them to council members, then they (council members) made individual contacts with 4-H members, inviting them to group sessions."

[6] Hippitt, Op. Cit., p. 669.

## Working with Youth

In a presentation emphasizing the need for thorough planning in the development of 4-H activities, two Extension specialists in Virginia urge that "youth programs can serve as a focal point for more effective community action. Many times throughout our history," they submit, "youth programs have served to initiate new types of activity which served to solve community problems."[9]

*Helping Leaders Help Youth* responds to the mission outlined above. First, it is based upon research indicating that "direct training in techniques of leadership results in improved effectiveness as a leader."[10] Second, the materials — both sound sheets and the leader development meeting series — encourage leaders to understand that "there does not appear to be a single pattern of behavior which can be practiced as to yield consistently the best performance under all conditions."[11]

If 4-H members are to play significant parts in the revitalization of their rural communities and city neighborhoods, obstacles standing in the path of that goal must be carefully analyzed. Such work might well serve as an antidote for the "boredom" which urban and rural leaders alike see as rampant among adolescent youth; and the presence of highly capable "junior leaders" is a concrete manifestation of possible outcomes. Meaningful participation in community affairs would also foster greater cooperation among youth-serving agencies, an arena in which 4-H is already demonstrating an ability and willingness to take the first step; at least, the Extension offices were assuming this role in the counties involved in our studies.

## Summary

Truly, our country's need for viable programs of social development is acute. If "development," in the words of a noted scholar, does indeed "exploit a delicate web of human acceptance,"[12] 4-H leaders, their club members, the latters' parents, and all

[9] David L. Groves and Gerald H. Cross, "Towards a Theory of Curriculum Development in 4-H Natural Resource Programs," *Educational Planning*, V. 1, No. 4 (March 1975), pp. 50-57.

[10] Ralph M. Stogdill, *Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of Theory and Research* (New York, N.Y.: The Free Press, 1974), p. 412.

[11] Joseph A. Olmstead, "The Skills of Leadership," Professional Paper No. 15-67, Human Resources Research Office, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., April 1967, p. 66.

[12] Paul Meadows, *The Many Faces of Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1973), pp. 29-30.

those individuals and organizations favorably disposed towards 4-H are parts of a reservoir of human talent capable of fashioning a healthier, more dynamic society. They will need assistance, though, and the intent of *Helping Leaders Help Youth* was to render that aid.

## What 4-H Volunteer Leaders Said and Wrote About the Leader Development Meeting Series . . .

"I could have really used this program as a new 4-H leader last fall."

"Reminded me that my more mature members need greater leadership role!"

"I am very happy that this series was offered and hope that it will be a permanent addition to the 4-H information available to leaders."

"I felt the material was good — the first sessions were definitely for those who knew nothing about 4-H."

"Unit II had material which to me was very applicable to my group."

"Unit II moved faster. Both units really did work together, tho."

"Unit I helped you get a club started and Unit II helped you make it work."

"Gave me a much better idea of what was expected of me as a leader."

"Setting up goals and evaluation of club's activities. The course gave specific areas to look into and guidance as to how to accomplish your goals."

"I missed the second session due to illness, but did enjoy the workshop just to get ideas for our club."

"It helped to answer a lot of my problems."

"It didn't exactly solve any of my major problems but workshop did broaden my vision for program planning."

"An excellent review on making the leader realize that the program must start with the youth's need — at his level and interest."

The vinyl sound sheet offers a rather brief discussion of the leader development project and evaluation activities associated with it. In this section you can find more elaborate details concerning both the program and the evaluation.

There are three parts to the written report. They include descriptions of the following segments.

Part I SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Part II ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES

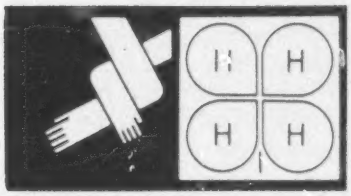
Part III IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The evaluation plan and rationale were based in part on the work of Samuel Sieber, who has advocated the use of case studies with broadscale surveys. This combination, he submits, links systemwide planning to local programs and acts as a probe for discovering unique circumstances.[1]

Again, feedback obtained from participating leaders provides a background for the three-part narrative. The latter is followed by an ***Order Form*** giving specific information about costs and procedures for those wanting to buy the vinyl sound sheets.



[1] Samuel Sieber, "The Integration of Field Work and Survey," *American Journal of Sociology*, V. 78, No. 6 (May, 1973), pp. 1335-1359.

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**PILOT COUNTIES**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Clay* | Hamilton | Schuyler-Brown |
| DeWitt* | LaSalle* | St. Clair |
| DuPage | McLean | Vermilion |
| Fulton* | North Cook | Winnebago* |

* Counties where case studies were conducted.

*The Illinois Cooperative Extension Service
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